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(74) Agent: **ASTRAZENECA**; Global Intellectual Property,  
S-151 85 Soderatlje (SE).

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(71) Applicant (*for all designated States except MG, US*): **ASTRAZENECA AB** [SE/SE]; S-151 85 Sodertalje (SE).

(71) Applicant (*for MG only*): **ASTRAZENECA UK LIMITED** [GB/GB]; 15 Stanhope Gate, London, Greater London W1K 1LN (GB).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (*for US only*): **ABEDI, Vahak** [SE/SE]; AstraZeneca R & D Sodertalje, S-151 85 Sodertalje (SE).

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(54) Title: **CHEMICAL PROCESS**

(57) Abstract: The present invention provides a process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I): wherein R<sup>1</sup> is C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl; R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are, independently, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl; and R<sup>4</sup> is C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl or benzyl (wherein the phenyl ring of benzyl is optionally substituted by nitro, S (O)<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl), cyano, C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl, C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy, C(O)(C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl), N(C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl)<sub>2</sub>, CF<sub>3</sub> or OCF<sub>3</sub>); the process comprising reacting a compound of formula (II): wherein R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> are as defined above, with a suitable base; and reacting the product so formed with R<sup>1</sup>OC(O)CH<sub>2</sub>X, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is as defined above and X is chloro, bromo or iodo; wherein the process is carried out in a suitable solvent at a temperature in the range -40°C to -5°C; and wherein at least 0.2 moles of the compound of formula (II) are used in the process.

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